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A GRANDFATHER'S MUSINGS.

I AM always thankful that I married young, and that my son also married when he was five-and-twenty, for it has conferred upon me the inestimable pleasure of grandchildren while I am still vigorous enough to enjoy their company. This is no small boon to an elderly man of sixty-six, who lost his wife in the bloom of her youth forty years ago; for when you approach the confines of that age when life becomes a labour and a sorrow, and when even the grasshopper is a burden, you take more interest in your grandchildren than in your children. Now that I have given up business, I grow tired of hearing my son talk about the price of Indian railway securities, and of new joint-stock banks (when I was a young man, we put no faith in joint-stock enterprises); whereas I take a very lively interest in the boat which Tommy is constructing by the aid of his new box of carpenter's tools, and in the doll whose clothes Winifred has been so busily cutting out. The fact is, that they are young children, and I am myself growing to be an old child, so that we all sympathise together; whereas I am a little afraid of my son Samuel. He has always been a pattern boy, and now he seems too old to be my son. He is getting so stout, and so gray about the whiskers, that I can't believe I ever kissed the top of his little bald pate, or put my finger into that solemn-looking mouth to ease the pain of teething. So you see I like to skip a generation, and fancy that his children are mine.

But alas! they are all away just now, and I am left alone. Samuel has taken the whole family to Switzerland for a month's holiday. My daughter-in-law wanted me to go too, but I declined. There is too much fuss and hurry-scurry in these family expeditions to suit an old fellow like me, and I remember that Henrietta on such occasions is apt to post me as sentry over the luggage while she and Sam go hotel-hunting. So I choose to stay at home in the old house, although I miss my little ones' childish tread and merry voices every hour of the day—especially Winifred. The girls wind themselves round an old man's heart more than the boys

do. I should love her if it were only for her name, for she was christened after my poor dear wife, and I thought how kind it was of Henrietta to call her Winifred, when I remembered her three maiden aunts, who all wanted to be namesakes to the little new-comer. But my Winifred deserves to be loved for something else besides her sweet-sounding name. She is a most captivating, engaging little puss; and I can fancy at this moment I hear her silvery voice, and see her great blue eyes fixed solemnly on my spectacles, as she inquires with earnest accents whether I don't think Lady Rosalie's crinoline is a little too big for the present fashion. Lady Rosalie is a doll of great beauty and distinguished appearance; and you may call me a doting old fool, but as Henrietta decided that the heat of the continent might spoil her ladyship's complexion, she is now placidly sleeping among the shirts in my wardrobe. 'And remember, gran,' said Winnie, holding up an imperious forefinger, 'you must open Rosalie's eyes every morning, and shut them up when you go to bed;' which important commission I endeavour to execute faithfully.

Yes, we are all alone in the house, that is, myself and Mrs Mewkes the cook. The silver is gone to the banker's, for I would much sooner eat my dinner with a two-pronged steel fork, as I used to do when I was a young man, than be worried with the perpetual idea that there was somebody in a black mask climbing over the garden-wall. Mrs Mewkes's society does not compensate for the absence of my dear children, for she is rough and gruff, and of a fiery aspect, as if she occasionally spitted herself instead of the joint. Then she labours under the belief (entirely unfounded), that because I am a grandfather I must perforce be deaf, and in spite of my remonstrances, summons me to dinner as if I were a ship labouring in a gale of wind half a league away from her. Active and energetic she is withal, and this afternoon she has been raising such a cloud of dust in the dining-room, that when I went out on the first-floor landing, I sneezed as if I was living over a snuff-manufactory. So I have retired to my bedroom, and mean to make it my abiding-place till that unquiet spirit has swept and

garnished the other apartments. Here I am then, pen in hand, amusing myself by noting down the stray fancies that come into my head.

I love this old bedroom of mine. I hope I may be permitted to die in this room, and in that bed, where my beautiful Winnie died forty years ago, in giving birth to a baby that only lived three weeks. Poor Sam! I have often grieved to think what a loss he unconsciously incurred that day. I don't mean the loss of his mother—that is a void which no fatherly affection can altogether fill up—I mean the loss of his baby-brother. I sometimes think that if Sam had had a brother to play with, he would not have been such a staid and solemn child. Poor fellow! he had only grown-up people to amuse him, and grown-up people are at the best very poor substitutes for children. Forty years since, my Winifred left me! What a long time, and yet what a short time it seems! Some people may wonder that I could endure to lie in the room afterwards. But I have no supernatural fears; on the contrary, I have often prayed that my wife's spirit might be permitted to visit me. I have sometimes lain awake on a moonlight night, hoping that the door might open noiselessly, and her gentle ghost come gliding in, as Margaret's did in the old ballad. But such a sight has never been vouchsafed to me. I have seen her constantly in dreams, though never as she looked when dying on that bed. In my night-visions, she has always appeared bright, cheerful, and blooming as she was in life. Dear Winifred, I need not make myself melancholy about you, for your sufferings are long since over, and in a very few years I shall have the pleasure of rejoining you.

I can't help thinking that if my wife had lived, she would long since have insisted on our leaving this house. When I bought the lease, it was quite out of town, surrounded in summer with sweet-smelling hayfields. I remember finding a wasp's nest in a hedge-bank as I walked to the City one morning, and telling Winifred that if I were a school-boy instead of a grave drysalter, I should have great pleasure in blowing it up with an ounce of gunpowder. Well, where the wasp's nest used to be there is now a low Irish court, and the human wasps (much given to stinging one another) buzz in and out of a noisy beer-shop at the corner. My mansion stands in three-quarters of an acre of ground, but I am completely hemmed in by streets; and over the way, through the branches of the tall elms, you can see the flaring lights of the *Pomona Tavern*, an establishment which is licensed pursuant to the Twenty-fifth of King George the Second, and whence, consequently, at this moment strains of melody are proceeding. The sound comes softened through the foliage of the trees, and I can hear the tune, though I cannot often distinguish the words. Hark! what a rattling of glasses and thumping of sticks. 'An-corr! an-corr!' floats on the evening air. They are applauding Miss Clarissa Delmar for her delivery of *Pretty, pretty Polly Perkins*. I know Miss Delmar by sight, an anxious-looking, pale-faced lady, whom I frequently see entering the

private bar of the *Pomona* with a bundle in her arms. That bundle, Sam tells me (he is churchwarden of the parish, and knows everybody), contains Miss Delmar's baby. You needn't be shocked, for Sam goes on to say that she is a married woman; that her husband is a compositor with a delicate chest, and that the proceeds of her vocal labours have just enabled him to take a week's holiday at Margate. Hush! another song, this time by one of the sterner sex—*Coming down Holborn Hill*. I can't hear anything except the chorus, but I rather like these songs about familiar London localities. The tunes are generally pretty; and I am glad to find that people are gradually tiring of black Sambos, yellow Dinahs, and cotton-picking. Besides, they remind me of the old style of ditties which we used to hear at Vauxhall when Vauxhall was in its glory.

The September air is getting chilly for my old bones, so I shall shut the window, and ask Mrs Mewkes to put a spoonful of fire in the grate. Talking about that poor consumptive compositor going down to Margate, what a distance from London, quite humble people are able to travel for pleasure in these days! Let me recall two or three instances. Coming up from the City the other day in the omnibus, I heard the driver request the guard (I like the old-fashioned word 'guard' better than the Frenchified 'conductor') to step down and purchase twopenn'orth of shrimps for tea. The guard did so, and as he carelessly ate one or two, by way of testing their quality, he shouted across the roof to his companion: 'They can't hold a candle to the Ramsgate prawns, Charley!' Whereupon, being an idle inquisitive old gentleman, I questioned my friend the guard, and learned that he and the coachman had 'lain still,' as he styled it, the preceding Sunday, and had had a feast of Kentish hop-gardens, chalky cliffs, and real salt water for three-and-sixpence a head. Again, I heard that pallid little workwoman who comes to help Henrietta with the sewing-machine, say that she had been for a week at the above-mentioned watering-place. 'O mum,' she exclaimed, 'I was so grieved to come back.' I don't wonder at it, for she lives in a dreary little second-floor back (I sometimes go there to read to her mother), where she sits stitch, stitch, stitching away in company with that purblind old lady (who is perpetually washing up tea-things), and a smoky canary, who does nothing but chirp, and is always moulting. Let me mention a third instance. Last winter, I undertook to seek an interview with the Turncock of our district on the subject of frozen water-pipes, and while waiting to see that important functionary, took note of a pretty ornamental arrangement of shells and sea-weeds on the chimney-piece. 'Father made that,' said a young lady of nine years, whom, without irreverence, I may designate a Turnchicken, 'while we was staying at Walton-on-the-Naze, last August.' As locomotion grows cheaper and more rapid, I hope to find my friend the Turncock extending the circuit of his excursions further and further. The next generation, at any rate, may possibly see him, in his primitive blue uniform faced with white, admiring the Right sunrise, the plug-key which rests on his leather-capped shoulder serving as an Alpenstock; or again, they may behold him lounging in the scorching Prado of Madrid, regarding the native water-carriers with a contemptuous benignity

worthy of Sir Hugh Myddelton's statue in Islington Green.

I remember a caricature published when I was a young man, wherein a sweep and a coal-heaver exchange a dialogue to the following effect: 'I say, Joe, have you any thoughts of going to Margate this season?' 'Vy, Jim, as ve're rayther slackish, I thinks as how I shall.' Steam-boats had begun to supersede hoys at that time, still, the means of locomotion were very limited, and the bare idea of Cockneys of the baser sort visiting a watering-place was enough to raise a laugh. I can't answer for the habits of sweeps and coal-heavers, but I should say the sketch was too near the truth to excite much merriment now. Most labouring people, provided they are self-denying in the matter of drink, and are not overburdened with children, can afford one rural trip in the year. Threepence a week, laid perseveringly aside for a twelvemonth, will provide a man and his wife with the means of a nice little day's jaunt, which will dwell as a red-letter spot in the mental calendar for fifty-two weeks following.

How was it in my young days? Why, poor people who wanted a little change of air were obliged to be contented with a stroll to Hampstead (it was a charming country walk then, forty years ago), or they carried their bundles of provisions to Battersea Fields, picnicking on the banks of the dear old skiff-covered river, in full view of the Chelsea veterans with their red coats and tinber toes; or they were rowed down in a wherry to Greenwich, and heard the heroes of Nile and Trafalgar (who in those days were plentiful as black-berries) fight their battles over again on the top of One Tree Hill. What a view there used to be then from the high grounds of Greenwich Park, on a fine Sunday afternoon, when the factory chimneys were all smokeless, and the kitchen fires had been suffered to go out! You saw London in the distance, looking as it ought to look, like a great city. For when the nineteenth century was in its teens, a broad belt of green fields separated the brick and mortar giant from the old town of Greenwich. Northward, lay the Isle of Dogs, verdant with rank pasture, and dotted with red cows, while, loftily above the inferior mass of buildings, towered the noble dome of St Paul's. Now a days, if you climb to the same points of view, what do you see? It may be that my old eyes are getting dim, but, on the finest Sunday possible, I can't distinguish the town for the multitude of houses; the river-line is beclouded with steamer-smoke; the Isle of Dogs is defiled with boiler-factories and skeleton vessels; while the old cathedral, whose native grandeur nothing can altogether quench, is only visible by fits and starts through the mist caused by three million inhabitants. I won't say much about the river, for he still glitters thankfully when the sun shines upon him, but he is a sadly dirty old personage to what he was in my youth. I hope Sam may live long enough to see him restored to his ancient dignity as the silver Thames, though, from what I can hear, the present effect of the grand drainage-scheme has been to poison all the fish down at Erith, while the river above-bridge seems as muddy as ever.

You must not fancy, then, you intelligent clerks and artisans, who take your excursion-tickets for Brighton or Boulogne, that your benighted forefathers had no pleasures of the same kind. A

row from London Bridge to Greenwich was a very different thing five-and-forty years ago to what it is now. Our pleasures were fewer, perhaps, than yours are, but we enjoyed them more keenly. I am afraid I am getting to be what our curate called me one evening when he dropped in to tea, a *laudator temporis acti*. Sam has forgotten all his classics, so I looked out the phrase in the *Dictionary of Quotations*, when the curate had left, and found it meant, 'a praiser of the days gone by.' Very likely, as the Scripture has it, I do not say wisely concerning this matter, but you must pardon an old fellow's prejudices. I have a firm belief that no child of the present generation anticipates a railway excursion-trip as I anticipated that expedition into Epping Forest in the year 1809. For why? The modern child gets so many outings, that one amusement drives another out of remembrance, as pellets are expelled from a pop-gun. My father and mother were humble folks, and had to do things in a very homely way. My mother made all the necessary preparations with her own hands; and such was my tiptoe state of expectation, that she appeared to me to begin manufacturing the veal and ham pie and the apple-turnovers at least six weeks before the treat came off. At last the eventful day arrived, bright with sunshine, and tempered with the softest breeze that ever blew: 'Couldn't have been a nicer day if you'd had it made to order,' was the remark of the greengrocer whose van we borrowed. Myself and brother, perched up at the back of the van among the eatables, with our feet resting on the immense stone jar of home-made lemonade, were in Elysium. As we proceeded up Shoreditch, we passed a regiment of Volunteers with their bayonets glittering in the sunshine, and as their band struck up, I felt it was all to do us honour. I can't help fancying the old Volunteers, with their neatly-powdered heads, shaven faces, and tight breeches, were more military-looking than the loosely-dressed, bearded, pipe-smoking youths who are in the ranks now; but I daresay such ideas arise from my old-fashioned prejudices. To return to our Epping excursion. I have no doubt there were some drawbacks; I heard some discontented middle-aged person (to whom 1809 was thirty years too late) complain that the van was rickety, and smelt abominably of onions. I have a dim recollection that the greengrocer's mare, though warranted stanch, began jibbing near the Ironmonger's Almshouses in the Kingsland Road, owing to the fascination of a particular public-house hard by; and that my father, leaving the obstinate animal in charge of the pot-boy, had to return ignominiously on foot three-quarters of a mile, in order to beseech the greengrocer to drive the mare himself. What did we boys care? All this added to the fun; besides, we were in Elysium. But there are degrees of bliss in Elysium. We were as yet only on the lower rungs of the celestial ladder. When we reached the Forest, we were on the top-step of happiness. We were foresters free. I was Robin Hood, Brother Jack was Little John (he nearly put an old lady's eye out with a shot from his cross-bow), and there was a Maid Marian, a sweet little lassie of nine, in a straw-hat with sky-blue ribbons. Talk of your dyes extracted from coal-tar—your mauves and magentas; I have never seen the colour that could come up to that sky-blue. Alas! alas! that little lady is now a grandmother, a corpulent

dame with three chins, and a figure more like that of Friar Tuck than any other member of Robin Hood's company. To finish my story: we came home in a drenching rain—genuine picnic weather, as the philosophical greengrocer observed; and we boys enjoyed ourselves more than ever making-believe to play Robinson Crusoe under the tarpaulin. But I suspect that my father was not quite so happy as we were, for the cold rain beating on his face gave him the toothache, while my mother always attributed her rheumatism to the wetting she got in Epping Forest.

Now, do modern boys and girls enjoy anything as heartily as we enjoyed our picnic? I humbly fancy not. They are too matter of fact and wide-awake. They seem to have lost the old childlike spirit of wonder and ideality. When my Uncle Tom took me to the play to see *Hamlet* (it was in a little country town, and I suspect very indifferently performed), the sight of the ghost overwhelmed me; my knees smote together, the hair of my flesh stood up, and had not my uncle providently thrust his pocket-handkerchief into my mouth, I should have screamed aloud. Throughout the performance, I regarded the ghost as no mere actor, disguised in tinfoil armour, but as a veritable spirit. Well, this last summer, I took Tommy and one of Tommy's school-cronies to the Lyceum Theatre. It was their first play, and the play was *Hamlet*. They were pleased, but their pleasure was of a calm and critical sort. They were interested in trying to discover what they called the 'dodge' of the mechanical effects; and Tommy's friend, who is a Nursery Professor of Chemistry (blowing himself up occasionally with fulminating powders), whispered audibly to me (whom, of course, he regards as a benighted antediluvian), 'I say, Mr Whitehead, that's the lime-light which shines on the ghost's head. Doesn't it look jolly?'

I don't think modern Londoners are so proud or so fond of their native city as we used to be. Several reasons may be assigned for this. In the first place, there are no genuine Cockneys left. Everybody has travelled beyond the sound of Bow Bells, and, as a natural consequence, comes back discontented. Dapper clerks run over to Napoleonic Paris, and return to sneer at poor old London. Whereas, I can remember when it was part of a patriotic Londoner's creed to praise everything metropolitan. Each individual Cockney felt a personal ownership in the Tower, crown-jewels, wild beasts, and all, and would resent a jibe at Miss Linwood's Collection of Needlework as a personal insult. Now a days, the more you run down the ugliness and inconvenience of London, the better pleased are the Londoners. I am half ashamed now to think how we bragged of Regent Street, and I am certainly surprised to remember that we boldly pointed out the Blackfriars Road to foreigners as the most magnificent thoroughfare in the world; for I am not so fond of London as I used to be; my old idols have been supplanted by new ones. Waterloo Bridge is snuffed out by New Westminster; and Northumberland House, lion and all, looks paltry by the side of the gigantic Charing Cross Railway Station. Then London has grown too big to be loved. When the New Road formed her northern limit, she was of reasonable dimensions—you could walk all over her in a day; she was less smoky, and not nearly so noisy. After six o'clock

in the evening, the City was as quiet as a country town is at the present time; whereas now, a stream of omnibuses and cabs pours through the main streets till after midnight. Lastly, the population was formerly more thoroughly English. We had, I am aware, the Irish in St Giles's, and the French emigrants. But now London has become, like New York, the gathering-pound of all the peoples of the world: German sugar-bakers in Whitechapel; German clerks in Islington; foreign Jews, Greeks, and Parsees swarming in the City; Chinese in Wapping; Italians in Hatton Garden; and every continental nation in Soho.

What a stir was made, a year or two back, about the drawing-rooms at St James's Palace! I read in the papers that ladies had their beautiful Valenciennes' lace torn to tatters, and their diamonds trodden under foot, just as if they had been dancing in Alger's booth at Greenwich Fair. People wrote to the *Times*, and said that St James's Palace wasn't big enough to accommodate the company. Thinks I to myself, St James's Palace is only a type of a hundred other things. Rotten Row is too small for the scores of horsemen and horsewomen; the streets are too narrow for the cabs and omnibuses; England is altogether too crowded for comfort. Too many people, to my fancy, and too much of everything, except meat and drink. The necessities of life never seem to grow more plentiful. But we are oversupplied with luxuries. Take the newspapers, for example. They used to be content with a single leader; they now have three or four, besides copious correspondence from all parts of the world. It's all very well to say you needn't read it all; if you don't, you get behind those who do. I speak here of men in active life, like my son Samuel. As for an old fogey like me, if I were to give up the newspapers altogether, and take to reading old volumes of the *Annual Register*, nobody would lose by it. Then as for novels: forty years ago, a professed novel-reader was content with a new book once a quarter. But my eldest granddaughter, who is just sixteen, reads a fresh novel every week, and assures me that she only picks out the titbits of Mr Mudie's literary banquet. Lastly, in my young days, a *bon-mot* by Mr Jekyll or the Rev. Sydney Smith was town-talk for a week after; while a poem by the authors of the *Rejected Addresses* would keep folks amused for a month. Whereas now—

It was just as well I left off where I did, in the middle of a sentence, for I was growing very prosy and didactic, and Mrs Mewkes was fidgeting about the staircase, for she won't go to bed until my light is extinguished, believing, apparently, that gentlemen who have the misfortune to be grandfathers are certain, sooner or later, to set fire to their night-caps. If Mrs Mewkes thought I read in bed (which I do not), she would give immediate warning. I wonder how old she thinks I am. I suppose, because I have a grand-daughter who is almost marriageable, she regards me as a Methuselah, sans teeth, sans eyes, sans everything! I hope to live long enough to astonish her by dancing a great-grandchild on my knee.

Three weeks have passed away since I wrote my last paragraph, and the family are expected home to-morrow. I read Admiral Fitzroy's weather prognostications with unusual interest, and am sorry to find that he foretells 'strong westerly

breezes with rain.' I have been in the City nearly every day lately, for Sam grows very nervous towards the end of his holiday, and though he gets a daily business-letter from his chief-clerk, fancies that something must be going wrong because he is absent. I am afraid none of us are of such importance to the world as we think we are. The world gets on wonderfully well without us. When I disappeared beneath the commercial waters (in other words, when I retired from the City), I fancied I should leave a whirlpool behind me; whereas, after a few bubbles, the water became as smooth as ever. So now, when I go down to the counting-house, the chief-clerk treats me with jocose joviality as 'an old man from the country,' who can't possibly know anything about nitrate of soda or blue vitriol. When I look at the ledger, he asks after my chrysanthemums; and when I plunge into the Customs' Bill of Entry, he says he hopes the inhabitants of the aquarium which he had the pleasure of presenting to me are thriving. However, I gather enough commercial news to satisfy Sam's thirsty soul, for he is a man of trade to the backbone, and Henrietta the Second (my eldest grandchild) writes me word that papa was seen reading the *Public Ledger* with absorbing relish on the Montanvert Glaciers! It is really very amiable of him to go to Switzerland at all, for I believe he would be much happier in Upper Thames Street.

Now, then, before I go to bed, I shall amuse myself with drawing a mental picture of their arrival. There will be two cabs—one containing the family, the other the servants and the luggage. Tommy, who has a lurking taste for horseflesh, will be perched up alongside of the cabman. The instant the vehicle stops, he will spring nimbly on to the door-step, and rush into my arms. Mrs Mewkes will be there, armed with a lantern (for Admiral Fitzroy prophesies wind), and looking like an Amazonian policeman. She will have devoted the last portion of the daylight to a zealous use of the Turk's-head broom, lest any cobwebs should be detected by the eagle eye of her mistress. And now Sam emerges from the cab, solemnly and heavily, walking, I declare, with an older step than I do; but then he is encumbered with a mass of plaids, and rugs, and guide-books, and such-like *Paterfamilias* gear. 'All well?' he asks. This means: 'Has the house been robbed? Have we stopped payment since yesterday morning? Has nobody run away with the office cash-box?' Then comes my daughter-in-law, to whom I gallantly offer an arm, comely and matronly, with her fair hair a little disarranged, and a precious burden—namely, grandchild the last—nestling in her bosom. Next appears her eldest daughter, fair-haired like her mother, and with a look of my dear wife in her soft eyes. This young lady is laden with Swiss toys, and she drops a Tanchnitz edition of a popular novel as I kiss her cheek. 'But where is Winifred?' I ask with surprise.

'Why, here,' says Tommy, snatching the lantern out of Mrs Mewkes's hands. The little monkey! she has hidden herself under a wrapper in a corner of the cab, and peeps out coquettishly, as if I was the Wolf, and she Little Red Riding-hood.

'No, I shan't kiss you, grandpa; I shall kiss Lady Rosalie first.' So I produce Lady Rosalie from behind a tall geranium, and then we all go indoors except Sam, who is settling with the cab-

men, and Mrs Mewkes, who sternly searches the interiors of the carriages, and discovers Miss Henrietta's brooch, and one of Miss Henrietta's gloves, and the drop of Miss Henrietta's earring.

The clock is striking eleven, and my picture is finished.

LADIES' LAW.

By this we mean not any general or particular laws which the ladies may have made, or may make, for themselves or for mankind generally, but the law of the land, the *lex scripta et unscripta*, which controls and provides for the wellbeing of the fair sex; a law is by no means so short and simple as might be supposed. It is troublesome to the judge as well as to the law-student, and it has been the subject of many bulky and learned treatises, which are as difficult to understand as the ladies themselves. Nice points are continually arising upon it, and cases thereon have at all times occupied a prominent place in the reports. Nothing pleases the lawyer more than to talk about the ladies; and the House of Commons, although it excludes them from their deliberations, yet strenuously exerts itself in their behalf. Indeed, it has been stated by the immortal Blackstone that even the disabilities under which a woman lies are intended for her protection and benefit, 'so great a favourite is the female sex of the laws of England.' It is true, perhaps, at the present day; but when Blackstone lived, the ladies were often unfairly treated by the law; for instance, if a husband killed his wife maliciously, he committed murder; while if the wife killed her husband, she was guilty of treason, and the law sentenced her to the same punishment as if she had killed the king, which was, until about seventy years ago, to be drawn and burned alive: and even at the commencement of the present enlightened century, if a woman stole a shilling's worth of bread, she was hanged; while her husband for the same offence was punished, perhaps, by burning in the hand, and a few months' imprisonment. Even now, a woman has no political franchise, and although she may hold property like a man, and be compelled to pay taxes, she has nevertheless no voice in their imposition. She is debarred from all professions, civil, military, or naval, although she may engage in any manner of trade. She may be an overseer of the poor, and if properly qualified, may vote in parish matters; and a woman, we read in the law-books, once held the office of parish-clerk, but there were great doubts as to the legality of the appointment.

If a man dies intestate (that is, without leaving a will), his personal property is divided equally among all his children, while his landed property goes to his eldest son alone, and the other sons and daughters of the intestate may be left to starve; while if the eldest son is dead, the property will go to his issue, although they may be females. - As it would be impossible within the compass of this article to mention all the law relating to the ladies, we shall confine ourselves to the part which is most interesting to the fair sex—namely, that relating to marriage and its incidents. Now, there are few things in this world more entertaining than a good breach-of-promise case. The ladies

flock into court in shoals to hear it, and everybody reads the report of it in the newspapers. Editors know full well what toothsome dainties such things are, and always give full reports, with the 'correspondence' set out *in extenso*. The more madly in love the gentleman has been, the more piquant is the report. Imagine, my dear Mr Reginald Plantagenet Devereux, all your letters to that once charming creature, Miss Montmorency Smith, being read out aloud in a crowded court by a vinegar-faced barrister in a gown and wig! Fancy what your feelings would be when he comes to that tenderly-written *billet-doux* you sent the plaintiff the day after the Bachelors' ball, and in which you bared your breast (on paper, of course) to 'my dearest little poppet.' Ladies and gentlemen, avoid being parties to an action for breach of promise, as you would the plague; and that you may be better able to do so, carefully study what we are going to say concerning that matter.

Now, as a wedding cannot be agreed upon and celebrated in the same moment, it follows, as a matter of course, that all marriages are necessarily preceded by contracts. These are called contracts of betrothment, and may be made either with or without writing. In fact, there are, as we all know, hundreds of promises of marriage made under circumstances which would render it impossible to put them down into writing; or perhaps if such a deliberate deed had to be done, timid gentlemen would shrink from the task, and think better of it. But there are, as we shall presently mention, some kinds of promises of marriage which must be put into writing, otherwise they will not be legally binding. In all cases of betrothment, the contract must be mutual and reciprocal, the promise of one party being the consideration for the promise of the other; but if one of the parties is a minor, such minor may repudiate the contract, although the other party of full age is bound by the promise.

As we all know, and have perhaps experienced, an offer of marriage is made, in the first instance, by the gentleman; and if the lady consents, the contract to marry is complete and binding. Now, it is not always easy to define what is or is not sufficient to imply or express consent on the lady's part, for on such occasions young ladies are apt to become nervous: they blush and stammer, and say they know not what—soft nothings, inaudible, perhaps, yet perfectly intelligible, may sufficiently indicate the required consent. Under such circumstances, a squeeze of the hand may be enough—a 'no' may mean 'yes'—her conduct, her actions at the time, may signify consent or dissent, and even her silence may be as eloquent as express words. Nay, even the offer of marriage itself need not be couched in terms which expressly declare an offer of marriage; but the offer may be inferred or presumed; for instance, if a gentleman takes occasion to inform a young lady that he thinks her an angel, that he loves her to distraction, and that his happiness is bound up with hers, and asks her whether the feeling is mutual; and the young lady replies in the affirmative, a fatherly jury would not have much difficulty in coming to the conclusion that a contract to marry was made.

Now, when an offer of marriage is made, as it generally is, in a retired place, such as the quiet corner of a garden, in an alcove, by the river-side, down in a diving-bell, inside a crater, or at the top

of a mountain, the performance is the work of a few minutes. It does not usually take long for the lady to say either that she will or that she won't; the offer is often made under such circumstances in a moment of passion, and the gentleman, before he recovers his ordinary demeanour, finds himself irretrievably hooked. But an offer of marriage need not be made by word of mouth, but may be communicated to the lady through the post, or by the Parcels' Delivery Company, or by a commissionaire, or may be made the subject of a sixpenny telegram. In such cases, the promise is supposed to be continually renewed, until the lady has had an opportunity of accepting or rejecting it; and the moment she has signified her consent to the gentleman, the contract becomes complete and valid. We may observe, for the benefit of gentlemen who have made rash promises, and want to back out of them, and for young ladies who wish to hook and secure their timid and fickle swains, that when a gentleman has made an offer of marriage to a lady, he has power to retract it at any time before such offer has been accepted. In the interest of the ladies, we would therefore advise them to lose no time in expressing their sentiments.

If Charley Graham, in the course of a *tête-à-tête* conversation, promises to marry Emily Stafford next Christmas, and she is willing, that is a binding contract; but if he promises to marry her next Christmas but one, such a contract must be in writing, signed by them; for where the marriage is to take place at some specified time upwards of a year from the making of the contract of betrothment, such a contract must be in writing, otherwise it will not be binding.

An offer of marriage may also be made conditionally; for instance, Charley Graham may promise to marry his beloved Emily, providing her father 'will come down with the money' to the tune of twenty thousand pounds; or the young lady herself may only consent to the marriage conditionally upon it receiving the approbation of her mamma. Now, if Emily's father will 'come down with the money' to the extent above mentioned, and the young lady's mamma consents to the match, the contract will in either case be complete, for the condition has been complied with.

In most cases, when a gentleman pops the question to a lady, and she consents, nothing is said at the time about when the marriage is to 'come off.' The law, however, presumes that the parties have agreed to marry within a reasonable period, and either of them may call upon the other to fulfil the engagement; and in case of default, may bring an action for breach of promise of marriage, and recover damages from the delinquent.

Our next object is to mention some of the consequences that ensue upon a contract of betrothment, and how and when the same may be avoided. Now, one of the consequences of being engaged is, that the gentleman sinks rapidly in the estimation of young unmarried ladies, and the young lady herself— But we are going into matters which do not at present concern us, our purpose being to indicate some of the legal consequences only.

If misrepresentation or deceit has been exercised by either of the parties, the contract may be set aside and avoided. It is a general rule of the law, that when a gentleman or lady

discovers the existence of circumstances connected with the person he or she has engaged to marry, which, had they been known to him or her at the time of the betrothment, would have prevented the engagement being made, he or she is discharged from the contract. This rule, however, does not imply that Charley can back out of his engagement if he discovers that his Emily is not a tithe so rich as her cousin, although at the time he became booked he was of a decidedly contrary impression. Nor can he 'cry off' when he discovers that his young lady, who before the engagement was as mild as a dove, and as meek as a lamb, has since shewed signs of possessing what is generally known by the name of a 'temper of her own.' Misrepresentation and deceit as to money affairs may also invalidate the contract; for instance, a Mr T. H. having been informed by a young widow, aged twenty-three, that her income was nine hundred pounds a year, derived from landed property, which piece of information was confirmed by the lady's brother, made her an offer of marriage, which was accepted. Shortly before the day fixed for the celebration of the marriage, Mr T. H. learned that his intended's income, although amounting to nine hundred pounds a year, was given to her only while she remained a widow, and therefore declined to proceed with the marriage, on the ground of misrepresentation and deceit having been used by the young widow and her friends concerning her income. An action for breach of promise of marriage was brought, but the lady did not succeed in obtaining a verdict. A man is not bound to marry a lady when he discovers, after making the offer, that she is, or has been, of an immoral character; but if a man chooses to enter into a contract to marry a woman of bad character, knowing her to be or to have been such, he is liable to an action if he refuse to fulfil his engagement. A man is not bound to marry a woman who has concealed from him the fact that she was deeply involved in debt; nor is a lady bound to marry a man who, after the engagement, enters into a drunken, dissipated, or profligate career: the law will not compel her to trust her happiness to the keeping of such a man. A contract to marry is binding although either of the parties may afterwards suffer a great misfortune, such as the loss of personal beauty or fortune.

If, after the contract of betrothment has been duly entered into, the gentleman disposes of all his property, and squanders the proceeds, say on the Stock Exchange, and becomes almost a pauper, the contract is still good; but if the lady dispose of any considerable portion of her own property without her intended husband's special concurrence, that is considered by the law to be a fraud upon his marital rights which will entitle him to withdraw from the engagement as soon as he is made aware of the circumstance. Nay, the law even says that if nothing has been said or agreed upon respecting the settlement to be made on the marriage, and the lady insists upon her own private fortune being settled to her separate use, free from the dominion and control of the intended husband, the latter is entitled, if he disapproves of the arrangement, to withdraw from the contract, and to say that he will not marry her upon such terms. There is a great deal more of learned law upon the subject of promises of marriage, but the above is all we have room for; before quitting this part of our subject,

we may remark, however, what is not generally known by the fair sex, that a gentleman may bring an action against a lady for breach of promise of marriage in the same way that the lady may sue the gentleman. In charging a jury in an action by a gentleman for breach of promise, Mr Baron Alderson said he was of opinion that a gentleman in such cases should acquiesce in the lady's decision, upon the principle that

If a lass won't change her mind,
Nobody can make her;

and then there were two other lines, the last ending with the words that somebody, he would not mention, 'might take her.' Happily gentleman v. lady actions are extremely scarce; and the litigious plaintiff, even if he succeeds, generally gets little else beside a verdict.

A few words about marriage-settlements. As we shall shew by and by, the whole of the wife's personal property, and to some extent her real property, is vested by the law in the husband. If, therefore, it is desired that the wife shall keep her own property, it should be settled before the marriage takes place; and settlements of part of the husband's property upon the wife should be made at the same time, in order to remain unaffected by his subsequent insolvency. When the wife's property is settled, it is usual to direct the trustees of the settlement to pay the income thereof to the wife into her own hands for her separate use, without allowing her the power of disposing of the income by anticipation. Then the income after death is to be paid to the husband if he survive her, and after the death of the survivor of the husband and wife, the property to go to the children of the marriage. Where the husband makes a settlement of his property on the marriage, he has usually the right to receive the income of the property, paying thereout a certain allowance to the wife for what is called 'pin-money' during the marriage; and after his death, the property goes to the eldest son, or other children, as may be arranged, subject, nevertheless, to a rent-charge or annuity to the wife for her life, in case she survives her husband. This is called the wife's jointure. The law of marriage-settlements is very abstruse and complicated, and provides a great deal of grist for the Chancery mill.

Let us now suppose that a marriage has taken place without a settlement having been made, and let us see in what respect the position of the lady is altered in so far as her property is concerned. As soon as they have been pronounced to be man and wife, the whole of her freehold property vests in her and her husband jointly. During the marriage, he is entitled to receive and pocket the rents and profits, and has the entire control and management thereof; and if there is issue of the marriage capable of inheriting the property, the husband will, in case he survive his wife, be entitled to the property during his own life, becoming, as it is termed, 'Tenant by the Courtesy of England.' With regard to her leaseholds, his power over them is still greater; for he is not only entitled to receive, during the marriage, the rents and profits of the property, but he may at any moment during that period sell it, and squander the proceeds. One little chance is indeed left to the wife, and that is, that if the husband dies before the wife, and he has not

during the marriage disposed of her leasehold property, it will, on his death, again belong to her absolutely. As a married woman cannot, except under special circumstances, make a will, she will probably die intestate as to her leaseholds, which will, on her death, belong to the husband. All personal goods and chattels in the possession of the wife at the time of the marriage, become the absolute property of the husband, whether he survives his wife or not, with this exception, that the wife's paraphernalia, that is, her wearing apparel and personal ornaments, suitable to her position and degree in life, will remain her property if she survive him, although he may dispose of them at any time during his lifetime. He can't do so by will, for a will, although made in the testator's lifetime, does not come into operation until after his death.

As the law gives the husband control over his wife's person and property, it also imposes upon him the duty of maintaining her, and any children he may have by her; and if he fail to do so, she may obtain necessaries for the purpose on his credit; but the husband is not bound to provide for his wife if she leave his house against his will (unless, indeed, she has been obliged to leave in consequence of the husband's ill-treatment), or if she be dismissed from the conjugal house by reason of her adultery. In such case, she must provide herself with the means of livelihood, for the husband is not bound to do so for her.

Another of the advantages which the law affords a woman in consideration of her husband taking all her property, is her dower, which accrues to her if she survives her husband, unless something has been done by the husband to defeat that right, which in ninety-nine times out of every hundred is the case. Her dower is her right to enjoy for her own life, after her husband's death, the third part of all the inheritable freehold property of which the husband was at any time seised during the marriage, and of which any issue that she might have had could by possibility have been heir. It is very unusual, now a days, for a widow to have any dower. It may, perhaps, be also interesting to know that a husband is bound to bury his deceased wife, but in strict law, a widow is not bound to bury her deceased husband.

If the husband dies, leaving a widow and a will, the latter usually provides for the former; but should the husband die intestate, his real property will not go to the widow, but to the heir-at-law, and she will receive a third or a half of the personality, according as there are, or are not, any children of the marriage. If there are children, the widow will get one-third of her deceased husband's personality; if there are no children, she will get half; the remaining half will be divided among the intestate's next of kin; and even if there are no next of kin, the widow will only get one-half of her husband's personality, the other half going to the crown, although, in such a case, the crown would doubtless remit it back to the widow. As we have already mentioned, the widow gets nothing out of the real estate, except dower, and that, as we have already mentioned, very seldom. This rule of law acts at times very harshly upon widows. We remember a case where a gentleman, who was married, but childless, was killed by a railway accident, without having made his will; and his property, which consisted entirely of freeholds, and

was worth upwards of three thousand pounds a year, went to his heir-at-law, a dissolute nephew, who had emigrated to the gold-diggings; while the widow was left almost penniless.

LADY FLAVIA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LORD LYNN'S WIFE.'

CHAPTER XXVII.—THE CAMPAIGN OPENS.

'MESSIEURS, Mademoiselle, mille excuses! It is not my fault if I keep you waiting so long. But, voyez vous, till Monsieur le Procureur Impérial shall ring his bell, I dare not introduce you.' And as the *concerge* of the Palais de Justice said these words, he took off his night-cap with a grin and a grace impossible to any but a Frenchman.

Colonel Ford, his daughter, his nephew, and the London detective, had been politely invited into the den, called a lodge by courtesy, which was the official abode of the *concerge* of the Palace of Justice at Versailles. There they sat on cane chairs, confronted by a series of highly-coloured prints representing Napoleon I. at Ansterlitz, at the Milan coronation, at the ceremony of the Champ de Mai, and lastly at St Helena. Madame Lebrun, wife of the *concerge*, was frying something savoury for an early dinner; and the fat old *concerge* himself, bald and polite, in apron and blue cotton night-cap, with a Turk's-head brush under his arm, was awaiting the tinkle of the bell that should authorise him to induct the English visitors into the presence of the public prosecutor.

It was very cold—a gloomy day in December. The sky was dull and lead-coloured, and the snow that lay white in the half-deserted streets of the old royal town of Versailles had a glare that contrasted with the murky darkness of the clouds overhead. Amy shivered as she looked out through the half-open door into the great hall of the Palais, that hall whose pavement had echoed to the tread of so many hundreds of disappointed suitors. The pavement was left in repose now, since the assizes were not going on. Only now and then did some lagging foot tread those cold stones, as some one passed towards the tribunal of the Correctional Police or the cabinet of the Juge de Paix. Sometimes, too, the clink of a sabre and the tramp of heavy boots would announce the entrance or departure of a gendarme who had brought in the report from his brigade, or an agent of police, or one of the smart *sergents de ville*, with cocked-hat and slim waist, and slender straight-bladed sword, would go in a leisurely manner down the steps in front of the stately portico. Then doors would be heard to slam suddenly at the end of long ghostly corridors, or at the top of grim flights of stone stairs, that led up to more and more *bureaux*, more and more law-courts, all of which seemed, for the moment, to be asleep and unused, like an engine out of gear.

It was the second visit which the Fords had paid to the Palace of Justice. At the first, Colonel Ford had presented his credentials, obtained from the Ministry of the Interior by the help of the French Embassy in London, to which latter application had been made by certain friends of the colonel's in town. These credentials merely vouched for the fact, that M. Ford (Richard), Colonel in the service of Her Britannic Majesty, was an honourable person, visiting France for the

purpose of obtaining important information, in the furtherance of which object the authorities were prayed to assist by all legal means. The Procureur Impérial at Versailles had received the bearer of this recommendation with much politeness, had listened to the colonel's statements, as interpreted by Amy, and had appointed that morning for the second interview.

And now the bell tinkled shrilly, and the visitors were shewn into the cabinet of the public prosecutor.

M. Achille Duvillers-Hardouin, the dreaded functionary in question, was a type of his class. He was the son and grandson of lawyers, being indeed of an old family of the *noblesse de robe*, and though a fervent imperialist for the time being, wore his loyalty loosely, like the Vicar of Bray. He had been appointed *substitut* by the July government, procureur by that of the Prince President, had been promoted to a better department under the Imperial system, and hoped that the next step, under what régime he cared little, would carry him to Paris itself. But he was none the less a most efficient sleuth-hound of Justice. He could track a political offender through all the mazes of the organic law; brought the Code to bear on rash journalists whose strictures galled the prefect; and demanded the head of a culprit with a terrible eloquence that Fouquier Tinville might have envied.

M. Duvillers-Hardouin was tall and rigid-looking, an elderly young man, rather than a middle-aged one, with a high bald forehead, a pale face, weak hair of a reddish tint, gold-mounted spectacles, a spotless white cravat, very high and tight, but not shining with starch like those of our English divines—of a dead pearly white rather—and a black frock-coat, with one button-hole blooming with the red ribbon of the Legion. He was a legal dandy in his way, and wore rings and a diamond brooch, besides the heavy gold chain and bunch of seals that dangled from his pocket in old-fashioned style. He received the new-comers with much urbanity, and as he motioned them to chairs that a grave *huissier* set ready for them, he said a civil word or two about his regret that Mademoiselle should have been put to the trouble of waiting. There were velvet chairs in the public prosecutor's study, not cane ones, as in the den of the concierge. The fire burned cheerfully, a wood-fire, resting on brass andirons. There was nothing official about the room except its chief occupant, and the row of huge folio volumes, with boarded sides and green morocco backs, that stood beside the great arm-chair of the Procureur Impérial himself.

Of the English party, Colonel Ford was, as far as European tongues went, the least of a linguist; he knew but some half-dozen French words; and though Charles understood the language tolerably well, he spoke it badly, on which account the labour of interpreting chiefly devolved on Amy. As for Sergeant Skinner, he knew something of the Gallic speech, and could eke it out with signs and haphazard guesses in a manner that answered wonderfully at times, but on an occasion like this he sat silent and observant. The preliminary compliment being over, M. Duvillers-Hardouin put on his most business-like air.

'Mademoiselle,' he said, tapping one of the monstrous green-backed ledgers that lay open beside him, with a great red R conspicuous in the

corner of the page, 'I will ask you again to oblige me by translating to Monsieur le Colonel, your father, this report, which I have obtained since last I had the gratification to receive your visit here. This is the report: Royston, *père* (Brand), *rentier Anglais*, has for about two years rented the half-ruinous Château des Roches, in the commune of Grèzes-Vignoble. Of the character of the said Royston, *père*, all the public functionaries who have any knowledge of the facts are agreed. Monsieur Royston is a man of most violent temper, and extraordinary physical strength, in spite of his age, already ripe (*son âge mûr*). He is often brutal and vehement in address and manners, passionate if contradicted, but occasionally capable of generous actions. He is not unpopular with the country-people about Grèzes. Speaks French well. Has within the last few months contracted a loan from a *marchand de grains*, at St Germain, who is known to lend money on usurious terms. Is restricted and broken as to his means (*crible*). Is a man remarkable for daring and audacity, which, with his formidable strength, have won him much respect among the peasants, always impressed by material advantages. Has gained the good-will of certain proprietors by breaking in horses considered incurably vicious, &c., in return for which they have permitted him to sport over their lands. Is fond of sporting, and an unerring marksman. Does not encourage visitors'—

'I beg your pardon,' said Colonel Ford at this point, 'but really I can hardly see how this information bears upon Mr Royston's complicity in the crime, if crime there be.'

The Procureur Impérial smiled with lofty superiority. He was desolated, if these petty details proved wearisome; but in his opinion they were valuable, as throwing a light upon the habits of the suspected person. He went on: 'Royston, *père*, has committed no action, since he came into the canton, which the authorities can fairly consider as criminal. He has once or twice given way to his temper, and struck blows; but no complaint has been lodged at the *mairie*. He once, under provocation, at Pecq, hurled a man, named Jean Vasseur, nicknamed the *Malin*, into the Seine; but this rough correction was acknowledged to be merited, as the *nommé* Vasseur, a man of bad character, and considerable renown as a wrestler and boxer (*savateur*), had insulted Monsieur Royston of *malice prepense*. Further, Monsieur Royston has been suspected of poaching (*braconnage*) in the imperial forest; but no *procès-verbal* was ever drawn up to this effect, nor is this offence uncommon on the part of even respectable farmers living near the woods. Of Royston, *fils*, it is only known that he haunted certain taverns in St Germain, well known to the police, and kept company with some of the most dissipated young men in the town. Of the ladies of the family nothing in particular is recorded.'

The Procureur Impérial ceased reading, and wiped his spectacles with a cambric handkerchief, while Charles Ford and his uncle exchanged looks of blank disappointment.

The public prosecutor smiled again. 'You see, Messieurs,' said he, 'how meagre is the information that I have as yet been able to extract from the *mairie*, the *gardes champêtres*, *gardes chasse*, and other rural officials. Certainly, on such grounds

as these, I should scarcely feel justified in recommending a domiciliary visitation of the Château des Roches, still less the provisional arrest of the person principally suspected. And yet—here the speaker's half-shut eyes, behind the gold-rimmed glasses, began to flash and dilate like those of a cat that sees a mouse within reach of her paw—'and yet I frankly tell you that I do not despair of seeing this Monsieur Royston and his confederates sitting on the *sellette* of the accused in the assize court. There are other witnesses to be sounded, and—here he looked at his watch—'I have telegraphed to the prefect of police at Paris for a person whom I expect will shortly be here. He is the best *limier* of Justice we have in France, and'—

Here the *huissier* came in and whispered something in the ear of the public prosecutor, then went out, and quickly returned, ushering in a gentleman, who carried a small black carpet-bag in his hand, and who came in, bowing low, and walking trippingly, like an *habitué* of the Boulevards.

And indeed the new arrival, to all appearance, was merely one of those hundred thousand copies of the Emperor that daily saunter and lounge about the cafés and fashionable thoroughfares of Paris—a plump, well-dressed man, with auburn chin-tuft and moustaches, tightly buttoned frock-coat, braided pantaloons, narrow-brimmed hat, and varnished boots. He, too, wore spectacles, but he wore them jantily, as if for show rather than use.

'I have been sounding your praises, Durbec,' said the Procureur Impérial, with an affable nod.

'Ah!' said the man from the Rue Jérusalem, 'Monsieur le Procureur is too good. We have done business together before, have we not, monsieur? and I hope when you are president of the tribunal, *là bas*, in Paris, that I may still have the felicity to purvey you thieves and assassins. They will never be wanting, that baronet there, *foi de Durbec*.'

As he said this, the French detective was taking a rapid survey of the company. When he saw the emissary of Scotland Yard, he held out his hand. 'Ah! *c'est ce bon Skinner*! Give me your hand, dear colleague. *Au plaisir de vous revoir*!' And he shook hands with Sergeant Skinner, good-humouredly remarking that it seemed a hundred years since they had met in London.

The English detective blushed as he took the Frenchman's hand. 'I ought to have known you directly,' he said, in self-reproach for his own slowness of perception; 'the name of Durbec did come back to me, somehow; but you make up—wonderfully well. Took me in, for a moment.'

The Gaul laughed. The praise thus indirectly rendered was music to his ears. Begging that the company would excuse him one moment, he vanished from the room, and almost immediately reappeared. It was difficult to believe that he was the same man.

Gone was the auburn wig, gone the chin-tuft and moustache, gone the spectacles, and the very complexion had been washed away by the rapid application of a wet towel borrowed from the concierge. The Durbec who now entered the room was a spare, sallow-visaged man of two or three and forty, with black eyes that seemed to flame, so bright and hard was their hawk's glance, with short cropped hair of the deepest jet, as stiff and

harsh as wire, with thin lips, pointed teeth as white and strong as those of a wolf, and a keen bold face. Sergeant Skinner nodded a cordial recognition, and whispered to the colonel that he thought if any man in Europe could find the needle in the haystack, that man was Monsieur Durbec, chief of the trusted agents of the police prefect.

The colonel eyed this French thief-taker with an interest which surprised himself. Richard Ford had been compelled, as other government officials had been, to keep spies in his pay, and had found such an office well suited to the supple natives of India. He had seen his emissaries suddenly cast off the decrepitude and squalor of extreme old age, fling aside their rags and false white beards, straighten their bent spines, and start up active and vigorous scoundrels as ever planned a dacoity. But never had he seen a scout whose features expressed such ability and resolve as those of Antoine Durbec.

The Procureur Impérial, a functionary of no slight importance, was playfully polite, almost affectionate, towards the master-spirit that he had conjured forth from the Rue Jérusalem. He asked kindly—not after Durbec's health—that would have been absurd in the case of a man whose iron constitution repelled the very idea of sickness, but after the policeman's birds and pet monkey. It was known that this hard, stern man had a weakness for favourites of this sort. His canaries knew and loved him, and would perch on his shoulder, and look up in his face in the most pertly confident way; and his monkey knew more tricks, and evinced more attachment to his proprietor, than any monkey in Paris. There was some softness, after all, in M. Durbec, and his furred and feathered pets had found it out. By his employers, he was rightly valued as the very pearl of spies; and it was a lucky day for the prefecture when the starving Provençal had been taken into police pay, and had brought his lucid reason and falcon eye to the aid of that establishment.

Durbec was invaluable. He was worthy of a higher place in the world than that which even the shrewdest agent of the police minister can occupy. Seven distinct languages, besides French, are spoken in some of the ninety-one French departments, and Antoine Durbec was fluent in them all. The Basque shepherd, propped on his stilts, and knitting stockings in the deep sands of the Landes, down by Bayonne there, answered him as readily as did the Flemish maid-servant brightening the brass door-handle of her master's house in Dunkirk or St Omer. German millers' men, going home in Alsace with a cart full of empty flour-sacks, fell into conversation with him as naturally as the queer long-haired Bretons, in trunk hose and goat-skin jerkin, to whom he offered a mug of cider in some *cabaret* of far-off Finisterre. Corsicans and Savoyards were ready to hail him as a *pays* from Calvi or Chambéry. The Walloon shepherds of the French Ardennes were as friendly with him as his brother Provençals from the land of the troubadours. Besides his knowledge of the patois of a dozen districts, he could talk English pretty well. And this power of picking up strange tongues stood him in especial stead in France, where a linguist is as rare as a black swan.

Durbec's qualifications for his dangerous trade were not confined to the power of talking to many men in many languages; he—he alone, of all the

unconvicted—was supposed to know the thieves' signals and the mysterious freemasonry of the Toulon prison-yard. He was the only living man who had boldly ventured into a *séance* of the Italian Secret Society, and had sat composedly taking notes in the midst of fifty daggers, that at a word would have been sheathed in his body. He had captured some of the most ferocious ruffians in France, men who for months had gone free from arrest in consequence of their known boasting that the *corbeau* who touched them on the shoulder should 'eat knife,' and with whom the agents were averse to meddle: and his disguises would have made the fortune of a modern English exhibitor of character.

Such was the man who listened, without interrupting the narration by one word, until the whole facts of the case were before him, and then promptly said: 'Mon Procureur, is it permitted to give one's opinion?'

'Certainly, Durbec,' was the indulgent reply: 'no one's opinion can be better worth having in these matters.'

'Very well then,' said the Provençal, looking around him with his glittering eyes, 'you will excuse me when I say that I do not believe this *gros matamore* of an Englishman, this Monsieur Royston, this Blue Beard, that lives in his ogre's den at the solitary château, to be the true author of the plot which I vaguely see shadowed before me. There is an intelligence more fine than his at work in the affair, be sure of that—an *intelligence de femme*!'

The Procureur Impérial nodded approvingly.

'I see,' said he; 'your idea is that the true clue to this business will be found in England, at that place with the name unpronounceable—Harre—something, the castle of the Comte de Mortlake?'

'Yes,' said Durbec decisively; 'but the pear is not ripe yet. We must begin here in France, with your permission, and the consent of Messieurs the English here present, to whom I beg to offer my respectful homage. With some assistance from the commissary of police at St Germain, and the kind help of Sergeant Skinner, my former colleague and acquaintance in London, *je me fais fort* in four days' time to produce evidence such as may excuse Madame the Law in putting a little gentle pressure on this Monsieur Royston, to extract the truth.'

Sergeant Skinner was very willing to serve as a volunteer under the orders of so distinguished a professional person as Antoine Durbec; and, much to Amy's relief, the conference came to an end. But on the fifth day, which chanced to fall on a Monday, it was agreed that the Fords should repair to the town of St Germain, and there have another interview with the public prosecutor.

'It will be better so,' said the Procureur Impérial blandly, 'because we shall there have the witnesses under our hand, as the phrase goes, and be close to the *locus in quo*, if I may be pardoned for talking Latin in hearing of Mademoiselle. At two o'clock, then, on Monday, Monsieur le Colonel? It is agreed, *n'est ce pas*, Monsieur Charles Ford? Till then—Ah! permit me to have the pleasure of conducting you to the door of the Palais. *Au plaisir de vous revoir*!'

And so the Fords had nothing else to do but to walk back over the pear-shaped stones of the Versailles pavement, now protruding, black and blunt, from the layer of hard-trodden snow, to their dull lodgings in that dullest of towns. Sergeant

Skinner, after exchanging a few words with his English employers, had gone off arm in arm with his French ally, who had insisted on returning what he called the sergeant's genial hospitality in London, by standing treat to the extent of a *ponche* in the neighbouring Café Leblond. The Procureur Impérial remained to conduct his correspondence with the Ministry of Justice, and to lay down the pen at times and rub his hands in gentle exultation at the prospect of another conviction, and for a *cause célèbre* too, and of the promotion which the *affaire* Royston ought in common fairness to win for him.

'It ought to be Paris this time!'—his soliloquy ran thus—'Paris this time! To be sure, the procureur generalship of a department would be better remunerated; but who cares for a few miserable hundreds of *écus* more or less! Paris is life. There is a field there for honourable ambition. I may be a senator yet, before I am quite old. Yes, that must indeed be an ill wind that blows no good to any one. Paris, or nothing.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.—IN THE TOILE.

The gaunt gray château, built of cold-tinted stone, to which no friendly moss or lichen had imparted a warmer hue, stood up against its background of snow like a jail. A very hard fact it looked in the cheerless landscape, where the leafless poplars waved their bare arms over the neglected garden, and the ruinous out-buildings, and the naked rocks that cropped abruptly upwards out of the grass-grown earth. No grimmer dwelling-house, perhaps, existed in all France. Barred with iron as to its lower windows, dilapidated as to its steep roof, now heavy with snow, the old house frowned sullenly upon the world.

Forth from this uninviting mansion came, with slow tread and lowering look, the master of the house, Brand Royston, sometime of Royston Hall. He was not dressed in decorous broadcloth, as when he escorted Lady Flavia Clare from France to her cousin's house—her dead father's home—in the west of England. He wore a rusty old shooting-coat, and all his garments were shabby, and faded, and weather-stained. His heavy gold watch-chain, never paid for, most likely, but handed over with many bows by a smiling London jeweller, glad to secure the custom of a great Yorkshire squire, was the only thing about the man which seemed to appertain to a gentleman. Yes, one thing more—some undefinable expression in the face of this surly exile, a something which stamped Brand Royston, in the midst of degradation and debasement, as a gentleman still. He had that in his look, in his bearing and speech, in the very carelessness with which he walked, swinging his stick, and whistling up his useful brown spaniel to heel, that forbade you to take him for other than a gentleman. A bad man, very likely, a violent sinful wretch, but somehow a gentleman (as the word is commonly understood) to the last.

Mr Royston had taken one rather remarkable precaution before leaving the premises of the château that he rented; he had locked the front-door, very coolly and systematically, and had put the key in his pocket, where it jingled against other keys, and against something hard and metallic that was not keys. He walked sturdily along through the rusted iron gates, and so into the

broad high-road, bordered by trees, whose remaining leaves, of a rich yellow now, might be counted. A little way off was a steep little stone bridge, that crossed a streamlet, and then some tan-yards, whence came the crisp pungent smell of the new tan, and where a row of hides floated bleaching in the stream. Beyond the tannery was a smith's forge, and beyond that the straggling village street of Grésmez-Vignoble; while the broad high-road, white with snow, ran gleaming away far into the distance, flanked by poplars with bare ghastly boughs.

Mr Royston walked slowly on, till he got to the bridge, and there he stood listless, with one elbow on the stone parapet, looking down into the stream below. A melancholy prospect, surely. There was nothing to be seen but the white treacherous cat's ice, broken and breached by the stone-throwing of the village boys, beneath and around which the black current flowed sluggishly. Nothing but this, and the willows on the further bank, with their thousand slender arms, and the long sickly yellow leaves trailing in the eddies, and the bushes clogged with snow, and the undressed leather steeping in the chilly water, and the ugly white and yellow cottages, with blue doors and green window-shutters, of the mean French village street.

But the rusted iron gates and the turreted roof of the Château des Roches could be seen distinctly from that spot, and, oddly enough, it was in that direction that Brand Royston, Esquire, and still, perhaps, J. P. and Deputy-lieutenant, turned his restless gaze the most frequently. That an English gentleman residing abroad should take the trouble to watch the approaches to his house, might at first seem strange, and would in any case imply guilty concealment, or a morbid turn of mind; yet this was exactly the occupation of Brand Royston. He was uneasy; he had taken alarm.

How, or why, had he taken alarm? That is a question which the wide experience of M. Durbec, that prince of *mouchards*, could scarcely have solved. But so it was. How does the lark know, as he cowers with his mottled breast-feathers pressed into the grass of the downs, that broad swift wings are flapping overhead, and that far away in the sunny air the hawk is circling round for prey? Or, to take a fitter simile: how does the tiger scent out the coming danger? how does he know that the beaters are closing in, nearer and nearer, in a narrowing ring, that the nets are pitched, and the torches and spears got ready, and that the rockets are about to be launched to drive him from his cane-grown ravine to where the elephant-mounted sportsmen await him with their deadly tubes? But it is not necessary to attribute Mr Royston's uneasy suspicions to instinct; for peasants, however artfully questioned, may prate respecting those who have cross-examined them, and rural policemen are not always discreet respecting important inquiries of which they have obtained an inkling. It is not unlikely that the tenant of the ruinous château had heard some flying rumours which had put him on his guard.

More than one carter, clattering by with his white-tilted long-bodied vehicle, drawn by a sturdy Norman or Perrichon horse, touched his cap civilly to the well-known M. Royston; and sometimes a farmer, as he passed market-wards, spoke cheerily to the Englishman, his acquaintance. But those who addressed the squire got but short answers

and dark looks. '*Bien sûr*,' said they, as they passed on; 'there has been bad news from England. This good Monsieur Royston is *moussade* to-day.'

The good M. Royston lounged upon the bridge for a while, and then striding down the village street with his spaniel friking about his heels, he tapped at the window of the tiny post-office, and bought certain postage-stamps, enough for the transmission of several letters to England; then he sauntered back, and stood upon the bridge again. The outspoken thoughts of the good Mr Royston were none of the pleasantest. 'Curse her!' he growled in his deep voice; 'I write, and write, and what do I get in return? Riddles; absurd balderdash about her position, and her youth, and her gratitude for old kindness, and so forth, till I ask myself if I'm drunk or dreaming. That girl! But I'll not wait here till the twig's limed, and the bird snared. There's mischief afoot; I know there is. No place so safe as England, after all; and the confounded outlawry and the writs'—

Here Mr Royston stopped short, and scowled at the approaching figure of a man who had come so near, and so silently, that his coming was not noticed until he was almost at arm's-length. Down dropped the squire's left hand, mechanically, as it would seem, into the gaping pocket of his shooting-coat, and the low clear clicking of a pistol-lock, as the hammer was pulled back, and let down to the half-cock, followed at once. But Mr Royston took his hand out of the pocket that held the weapon, and he breathed more freely as he took a survey of the stranger. The latter was a broad-chested man, of middle height, clad in a ragged blouse, a sheep-skin cap, and high leather gaiters, smeared with mud and torn by brambles. He had a fowling-piece tucked under his arm, a small gourd containing gunpowder at his side, and a game-pouch slung at his back. The pouch was empty and flat, and in his hand he carried a willow branch from which dangled a leash of wild-ducks.

'Buy a couple of fine ducks, *mon bourgeois*, they are cheap!' said the man in the ragged blouse.

'I don't want your ducks,' replied Mr Royston gruffly, turning his shoulder to the tattered poacher, for such the man evidently was.

'*Excusez, notre maître*,' persisted the fellow; 'I have something more dainty than ducks to offer for sale, and at a low price too;' and from beneath his blouse, first glancing warily around him, he produced a fine pheasant, the long tail-feathers of which had been roughly hacked off with a knife, that the bird might be more easily concealed. 'There!' cried the poacher exultingly—'there's a *beau coq* for you, monsieur, such as the St Germain poulterers sell at seven francs, the rascals! But I'm hard-up for tobacco, and want my supper and my *glte*, and can't hold out for a high price. Come; forty sous for the pheasant.'

Rattling Brand Royston, despite the gloomy thoughts that filled his mind, was amused at the man's pertinacity. He looked at him more attentively than before. There was something reckless and at the same time comical about the man's impudent face, as he stood shewing his white sharp-pointed teeth in a grin that was meant to be polite, and his one eye, coal-black, and of hawk-like brilliancy, was fixed beseechingly on the Englishman. The other eye was covered by a frowzy patch of black taffetas; and some strips of plaster that

peeped out from beneath the silk were insufficient wholly to conceal an ugly cicatrice beneath. The fellow's entire aspect was that of an outcast at war with society, and perhaps a sort of sympathy stirred Brand Royston's rugged nature, as he said, more gently than before: 'The world seems to have used you hardly, my friend. But there are two sides to the account, eh? I'll warrant that plump cock-pheasant was reared in his Imperial Majesty's preserves, in the forest yonder, *pas vrai?*'

'It won't taste the worse for that!' was the reply, defiantly spoken; 'and the curse of Pilate on the *gradins*, whether lawyers, *gardes*, or police, who try to keep a poor man from earning an honest livelihood. The game, monsieur, belongs to all the world; and may the black death fall on the greedy curmudgeons who send a poor fellow to jail because he takes his share of what the woods provide! See here, monsieur; I got this'—and he pointed to the black patch that covered his left eye, and to the scar visible below the taffetas—'in a scuffle with the guards of the forest, and six months in prison to boot; but some day I shall see the villain who owes me an eye deep down in the woods, perhaps, where there are none but us two under the trees, and then'—He shook his fist vengefully, and with a savage snarl like that of a fierce dog, and brought the brass-bound stock of his gun down with a bang upon the frozen snow at his feet. 'Buy my pheasant, Monsieur l'Anglais!' These last words were spoken coaxingly, and in quite a different tone. Mr Royston laughed: he had been a strict game-preserver once, but times had changed; and he who had sent scores of English poachers to jail, felt a kind of interest in this French one, whose lawless effrontery diverted him. He thrust his hand into his pocket, and drew out some small silver, that jingled as it was dropped into the ready palm of the *braconnier*. He cut short the man's thanks by good-humouredly bidding him set down the pheasant on the coping of the bridge, and be off to drink his customer's health, and confusion to the game-laws, at the nearest *cabaret*.

For some time longer, the gigantic figure of the Yorkshireman might have been seen upon the bridge, as he clapped his muscular hands together to warm them, and idly gazed at the little group around the smithy door, where a horse was being shod. But presently, at the noontide hour, when the labourers began to straggle homewards from their work, Mr Royston picked up the pheasant, and strode back to the château, swinging the bird carelessly to and fro in his hand as he walked along. He unlocked the door, went in, and the grating of the key as it was turned told that the occupant of the Château des Roches chose to exercise a control over the incomings and outgoings of his household. It had not always been so. Brand Royston's doors had once been almost as easy of access as those of an inn, in the old days of revelry. It was new, this excess of precaution against surprise.

For perhaps an hour or more, the ex-squire remained indoors, but then he sallied forth again, securing the door as before, and wandered about his garden, always, however, avoiding, as if by instinct, one portion of the neglected demesne. This portion was the most remote nook of the great garden, the part that bore the nickname of the Tangle, and where the mouldering summer-house, and the gray sun-dial, stood in the midst of

weeds and bushes and unpruned trees, that no one had cared to trim or lop for long years past. But soon Mr Royston, with his hands thrust deeply into his pockets, and his hat pulled down over his brows, rambled out to the bridge again, and stood there, kicking the loose pebbles and lumps of snow down the bank into the water, and keeping a vigilant eye on the dreary stretch of snowy road, beyond which, on a rising-ground, might be seen through the leafless trees the red roofs of Grésnezles-cloches, and the white walls of the convent of Our Lady of Carmel. Apparently, the sight of these objects suggested no pleasant train of thoughts, for, with an angry malediction on some person or persons, the squire turned his bull-eyes away from the distant buildings. 'Death, by Jove, and nothing less!' he muttered, as he turned his head towards the village; 'but if that craven cur of a son of mine holds his confounded tongue—The sooner we get over to England, ay, and to America, perhaps—I feel like a fox that hears the hounds miles off, and knows what the cry foretells.'

Several persons of different grades in French country-life, from the rich farmer who jogged by in his demi-pique saddle, or drove past in his hooded cabriolet, down to the poorest woman that weeded and delved, and helped the sleek donkey and the lean cow to draw the plough sometimes, while her husband held the shafts, in Gallic fashion, went over the bridge; and many of these bowed to Mr Royston, and some spoke to him, for he was well known, and it is etiquette among the kindly French to salute a stranger, even when encountered far from a town.

To one only of these did the squire, in his present humour, deign to utter any remark beyond a brief *bonjour*. The exception was in favour of a man who drove slowly past, talking volubly to the young horse between the shafts of his heavy gig, which half-broken animal started aside as his inexperienced eyes caught sight of the burly gentleman standing at the corner of the bridge. 'Too soon, Guillaume, my man! you've brought out that colt too soon,' said Mr Royston in his bluff but intelligible French; 'you ought to have stuck to the *cavesson* for a fortnight more, and then tried him in double harness.'

The proprietor of the colt, who was a livery stable-keeper at St Germain, and knew Mr Royston well, pulled up at once. He had had, he said, a great deal of trouble with the young horse, *bête poltronne*, that shied at everything. Ah! if M. Royston would only condescend to buy him and train him, in his hands the beast would become worth double his present price; but it was not everybody who was such an amateur of horses, or knew so much of their ways, as monsieur.

Mr Royston gave a short deep laugh. 'I don't want to buy him,' he said; 'but, by the way, Guillaume, I have business on which I do wish to speak to you. Here'—And he spoke earnestly for a moment, though almost in a whisper, putting his mouth close to the man's ear.

M. Guillaume Laplace, livery stable-keeper, nodded several nods of assent. 'Good, good,' he said; 'it is an understood thing. You shall have what you wish by three o'clock on Monday afternoon, without fail, monsieur. Ay, and a good pair of horses, that can trot their ten leagues'—*'Asses, asses!'* said Mr Royston roughly; and the

livery stable-keeper, who knew his ways, wished his client a good-day, and drove on, just as a priest, in the long black cassock, the bands, shovel-hat, and lambs-wool gloves of a village curé, came slowly over the bridge. This priest was stout and rosy, with spectacles and gray hair that fell in thin locks from under his broad-leaved hat. His eyes were bent on the open breviary that he carried in his hand, and he mumbled Latin as he walked. Altogether, as he touched his shovel-hat in grave recognition of the salute which custom almost wrung from Mr Royston, he appeared as ordinary a specimen of the rural clergy as the tall Englishman had ever beheld.

'I wonder,' ejaculated Brand Royston, when the last sounds of the curé's footsteps had died away in the distance—'I wonder if the old boy heard that *oaf* Laplace with his "Monday afternoon, *sans faute*." Not that it matters much, after all.'

But Brand Royston would have had better cause for wonder, could he have known what thoughts were passing through the mind of that meek ecclesiastic who had returned his bow a minute before. He would have been startled had he heard the reverend man, once out of earshot, intermit the recitation of his Latin to say, in French spoken with a strong southern accent: 'Thou art a shy bird, brigand of England. Aha! *gros croquemitaine!* thou preparest thy counterplots, thou! But he will laugh well who laughs the last.' And as the curé spoke thus, he smiled a sinister smile, that exhibited a set of brilliant white teeth; pointed teeth that a wolf might have envied; teeth such as belonged to the tattered poacher who had sold the pheasant to Brand Royston; also such teeth as glistened when M. Durbee, of the Rue Jérusalem, smiled upon his friends and acquaintances. But the curé looked grave again as a passing villager pulled off his hat in token of respect, and his '*Bénédicite, mon fils,*' was spoken with unctuous emphasis.

Mr Royston's eyes followed the priest until the black *soutane* was lost along the white desolate high-road. Something, he knew not what, about the ecclesiastic had aroused recollections within him. He had never seen the curé, who belonged, no doubt, to some distant village; but whom did the curé so closely resemble? Not closely, perhaps, but there was a likeness to some one whom Brand had lately seen. The squire never thought of the one-eyed poacher who had vowed such deadly vengeance on the *gards* to whom he owed his mutilation and captivity; that depredator on the crown preserves was not in the least like the sleek rosy priest. But the best actor cannot always keep one part wholly distinct from another. If not the poacher of to-day, perhaps the shepherd of yesterday, sitting in his goat-skin coat, on the upland fallows; or the postilion, sauntering by with his tired horses; or the lame beggar, with the white beard; or the invalided soldier, tramping home, the day before yesterday, with limping tread and threadbare uniform, and his bundle slung upon a stick—perhaps one or other of these resembled the priest a little.

For the cowl does not make the monk. Poacher and shepherd, and postilion and lame beggar, and footsore soldier and portly priest, were all mere husks and outer skins, and the inner core and kernel was—Monsieur Durbee. That stanch human blood-hound of the police prefecture had a

store of disguises, some of which had been sent down to him to the Hôtel du Paon, at Versailles, where he was staying under the name of M. Bonehamps, a commercial traveller for a Dijon house in the wine-trade.

As for Brand Royston, as evening came on, he lit a cigar, and strolled up to the smithy, and stood there for a time, watching the grimy good-natured workers as they hammered the hot iron, and sent showers of fiery sparks floating out into the night-air. He joined a group of idlers, and chatted affably with them; and they treated him with much deference, and laughed applaudingly at the sledge-hammer jokes in his blunt French that he made for the edification of his audience, and were pleased at the notice of the English gentleman. Then he wished them a good-night, and went home. Little did he guess that already his description had been sent to every seaport and frontier town, that escape was all but hopeless, and that he was in the toils at last.

TRADE-GUILDS: WHAT THEY DO, AND WHAT THEY MIGHT DO.

THE newspapers announce that the Coachmakers' Company are about to offer prizes for the advancement of the craft to which they belong. This is so completely a step in the right direction, that we would wish it every success, even although the beginning may be a very humble one.

The readers of this *Journal* do not require to be told at any length what the City Companies are, or what they do. They were established for a good purpose, every one of them, or what was deemed a good purpose in past days; and if they are no longer what we should wish them to be, or what they might be if their revenues were well applied, it is because the altered state of society has changed the relations of the craft committed to their supervision. Free trade is almost as much a discovery as the velocity of light, or the ellipticity of planetary orbits; and monarchs and manufacturers in olden time are scarcely to be blamed for having been but scantily acquainted with it. Some of the old attempts to create trade were fair examples of the *bounty* system, by which a man is rewarded with something beyond the mere profits of his adventure. Thus, so far back as the time of Athelstan, an offer of the rank ofthane or noble was made to any merchant who should make three voyages over the sea with a vessel and cargoes of his own.

In a charter granted to the Weavers' Company by Henry II., it was ordained, that if any weaver mixed Spanish wool with English wool in making cloth, the magistrates should burn it. This was a sop to the English wool-growers; but the next monarch gave a sop to the English weavers, by issuing edicts prohibiting the exportation of wool to Flanders, and directing the seizure of all Flemish cloth imported from abroad. As a sop to the Londoners generally, foreign traders in the City were at one time compelled to buy and sell only with citizens, under penalty of forfeiture of all commodities otherwise traded in; and on another occasion, all foreign merchants in England were compelled to sell their merchandise within forty days after its arrival; thus putting them wholly at the mercy of the buyers. One monarch compelled foreigners in England to

make all their dealings with Englishmen only, and not with each other. Edward IV. became prodigiously popular with the citizen handicraftsmen by ordering that foreign woollens, laces, ribbons, silks, shoes, cutlery, gloves, tanned leather, tawed fur, and dressed hides, should be prohibited altogether. The Bowyers, or archery bow-makers, obtained some years later a statute compelling merchants to import bow-staves in certain proportions with every ton of merchandise they imported, and to sell them only to English bowyers—a pretty attempt to lower the price of bow-staves. The Corporation, in the early days of the Tudors, made an ordinance that no citizen should carry goods for sale to any fair or market out of the city—a sop to the shopkeepers; but like all such sops, it produced more evil than good. Country traders complained that they had to travel up to London at great cost for their goods, instead of buying them at their own fairs; and parliament took away the sop to prevent dangerous discontent.

The disgraceful day known as 'Evil May-day,' in the time of Henry VIII., was marked by an atrocious attempt to expel by violence all foreign traders from the city, because they sold many foreign commodities cheaper than London makers chose to supply them. Many a sop was given by some of the sovereigns to favourites or to moneyed men, in the shape of patents or monopolies—powers to get some particular trade into their own hands, the patentee obtaining all the profits, and giving the sovereign a good round sum for the privilege. Gold and silver thread, horse-meat, starch, cord, tobacco-pipes, salt, train-oil, alehouse licences, alum, bricks, saltpetre, mines, ships' incombustible sheathing, steel, copper farthings, stone-pottery, gum, ore-smelting—all in turn were made the subjects of such monopolies, either in the manufacturing, the selling, or the licensing. Even to this day, the post-office financial accounts comprise a disgraceful item, in the shape of an annuity to the 'heirs' of one who obtained a monopoly in postal matters many ages ago. The sop given to the old city Companies was in many instances attended by results favourable to the community generally. Searchers or examiners were empowered by the companies to go about into the markets and shops, to test the grocers' weights and measures, to examine the fish, to taste the wines, to measure the cloth, and so on; and to seize all the commodities that offended in regard to quality, weight, or measure—a well-intended thing enough, but one that speedily led to abuse. The Merchant Taylors were busy with these duties in Cloth Fair, the Goldsmiths in Foster Lane, the Ironmongers in Ironmonger Lane, the Fishmongers in Fish Street Hill, the Woollen Drapers at Blackwell Hall, the Pepperers or Grocers in Soper Lane, the Butchers in Newgate and Stocks Markets, the Tanners in Cripplelegate, the Mercers in Cheapside, and other companies in other localities, where certain commodities were chiefly sold. How the useful privileges degenerated into abuses, every one can guess. It was an easy step for 'You shan't do wrong' to 'You shan't do anything without our permission, for which you shall pay.'

Foreign countries are prone to this sort of thing. Many of the older cities of the continent are famous for their trade-guilds; and Berlin, which is not an old city, presented its guilds in rather a remarkable light on the occasion

of the coronation of the present king of Prussia, three or four years ago. The reader may perhaps remember how glowing was the account of the ceremony given in the newspapers—how that, irrespective of the royal and official personages, the guilds, or manufacturing and trading fraternities, 'assisted,' as the French would say, at the reception of the king. There were, in fact, two guild processions—one at Königsberg, where the coronation took place; and one at Berlin, where the king made his 'triumphal' entry after the coronation. In the last-named procession, the gold and silver workers appeared in suits of clothing made of gorgeous cloth of gold and silver. The butchers came in blue and white dresses, such as the members of the guild wore when the electorate of Brandenburg had not grown into the kingdom of Prussia; and the brewers had in like manner their quaint old-time costume. All the other guilds in similar manner came forth with banners, bands of music, insignia, and fancy dresses. These German guilds, and many in France, are midway in character between our City Companies and our trade societies.

The *Preston Guild* is perhaps the most remarkable open-air recognition of these old fraternities at present kept up in England—more remarkable certainly than our Lord Mayor's Show, in which few of the Companies are represented except those to which the out-going and in-coming officials belong, while the 'men in armour' are hired, and the military bands lent by the sovereign. The guild at Preston is a collective name for a corporate fraternity or society of trades, which has existed for more than five centuries. During three of these centuries, it has been a custom for the burgesses to meet once in twenty years, to renew their freedom, and to hold a sort of parliament for legislating on corporate trade affairs. These meetings are called *guild merchants*. At first, they had a meaning, as just denoted; but they have gradually become little other than an excuse for a week's gaiety of a very special kind. The first guild merchant was held in 1562, the last in 1862, and the next (if the old custom is followed) will be held in 1882. Two hundred years ago, the guild was so managed that the Companies of Trades dined at their respective halls; there was a banquet given on one of the days by 'Mrs Mayoress' to two hundred ladies, who then 'danced the night out, till morning and weariness surprised them.' Not only for one week, but for six weeks did the festivities continue, each trade Company in turn shewing hospitality to the others.

The guilds of London were established each to exercise control over some particular trade or handicraft; the control was continued in many cases when it was not at all wanted; and when it was finally abandoned, the guilds continued to exist because they possessed large estates and revenues well worth looking after. These revenues have, in most instances, accrued from gifts made to the guilds by members long long ago: patches of land which are now worth a hundred times as much per square yard as at the time of donation. A few months ago, the Lord Mayor entertained all the City Companies to dinner on one particular evening; that is, the Warden or Master, and one or two other officials of each of the guilds. In many respects it was a curious historical assemblage—living representatives of a dead principle. We all hear of the

Goldsmiths, the Fishmongers, the Ironmongers, the Drapers, the Merchant Taylors, the Salters, the Dyers, and such like Companies; but who can tell us anything about the Pin-makers, the Pipe-makers, the Fan-makers, the Bowyers, the Bowstring-makers, the Barber-surgeons, the Armourers, the Patten-makers, the Grinders, the Innholders, the Fletchers, the Woolmen, the Horners, the Scriveners, the Broderers, the Loriners, the Comb-makers? They were all at the Lord Mayor's dinner, all English gentlemen in evening-dress, all representing something which had a meaning in bygone ages. There is, nevertheless, a little gleam of light peeping in. A few of the Companies are trying to do something to advance the trades to which they (nominally) belong. The Goldsmiths' Company have in recent years, by prizes and in other ways, endeavoured to draw forth native ability in high-class gold and silver work. The Painter-stainers (an odd little Company, with an odd little hall in an odd little street) have had exhibitions in each of the last three years, consisting of ornamental painting and graining. The Society of Carvers (not, we believe, one of the old city guilds) had an exhibition of competitive specimens of carving in 1863. And now the 'Worshipful Company of Coach and Coach-harness Makers' are about to follow in the same useful track. In a paper read at the Society of Arts a few weeks ago by Mr Davenport, he propounded the question—'Would it be possible to induce a combined action on the part of the eighty City Companies, the Chambers of Commerce, and other bodies, in aid of the industrial education of the youth of the present day, as well as to encourage the skilled workmen by the offer and award of prizes in each of their respective industries?' It may be that several of the Companies will give a favourable response to this query; let us hope that such may be the result. The Coach-makers' Company offer prizes, and the Society of Arts other prizes, for working drawings of carriages of various kinds, specimens of heraldic and ornamental chasing, carriage cushions, carriage framing, painted coach panels, dash irons, pads and bridles, carriage lamps, bridle rosettes, carriage door-handles, coach-plating, coach-carving, carriage door trimmings, and hammercloths. This will shew the mode in which it is proposed to bring out the skill of the workmen. Who knows? Perhaps one may yet see the old City Companies taking a worthy part in our social history, directly encouraging the advancement of their respective trades, as well as dispensing hospitality and providing asylums for decayed members.

OCCASIONAL NOTE.

THE GAME OF GOLF—ITS INTRODUCTION INTO ENGLAND.

In a world so beset with life-shortening cares, to multiply the innocent amusements which tend to cheer and lengthen our days, is worthy service to humanity. It is similar good service when we can extend to one place an amusement heretofore localised in another. Within the last forty years, England has imparted cricket to Scotland, and we believe Scotland is grateful. Let England accept back from Scotland in requital the game of golf. She as yet knows little or nothing of it, and she is not so well provided as Scotland with the ground for playing it. But if these obstructions could be overcome—and to a great extent they easily might be—her gratitude for this new pleasure would be as sure as that of

Scotland for the sacred game of the Eleven. For golf, a long stretch of common or downs is necessary. Intruding furze and occasional sand-pits, so far from being objectionable, are desired, in order to create hazards. The play consisting in a competition between two persons, or two pairs, to drive a small elastic ball from one to another of a series of small holes planted three, four, or five hundred yards apart, at the smallest number of strokes given by loaded clubs, there is necessarily a good deal of exercise for both the legs and the arms. At the same time, the progress over open, natural ground, the breathing of a clear atmosphere, the joyful sense of power derived from successful hitting and nice manipulation, and the frequent comicality supplied by difficulties and hazards, combine to create an exhilaration such as few games afford. It is eminently a middle-aged man's game, but is quite as much enjoyed by the young as the mature.

Perhaps this note would not have been written, if there had not lately been some symptoms of an inclination to introduce golf extensively in the south. For a hundred years and more, it has been practised on Blackheath by a club chiefly composed of Scotsmen who are so unfortunate as to be obliged to spend their lives in London. We rather think a golf-club similarly composed exists at Manchester. But of late our southron friends have been opening their eyes to the merits of the game, and now we hear of a new club designing (if the requisite permission can be obtained) to play on Wimbledon Common, and also of one established at Bideford, in Devon, where, in May, a large gathering is expected. It seems as if a movement had begun, which would only require a little encouragement from those who command the ears of the public to enable it to advance to good results.

Let us humbly do our best to aid in this good cause. Wherever there is a tract of downs with a short green-ward, wherever there is a common three-quarters of a mile long, there might be a golfing-course formed, which would enable all men living in its neighbourhood to add to their enjoyments and the length of their days. At Musselburgh, in the county of Edinburgh; at Prestwick, in Ayrshire; at St Andrews; also on Blackheath, and at Bideford, the details of the game could readily be studied; a small group of gentlemen could from any of these places translate it to their own neighbourhoods. There are also little hand-books of the game, containing the method of playing and the rules, which would largely serve in giving the needful instruction.

PARTED.

A FADDED flower, a lock of hair,
A little ring, a small white glove,
A portrait of a maiden fair;
Some crumpled notes, *Aurora Leigh*
With pencil-marks and inscribed name,
A favourite song oft sung to me;
A ribbon blue, with golden clasp;
A scarlet hood, with faint perfume;
A waist-belt small, with broken hasp.
What foolish things are these to keep;
So very small, so worthless too—
What folly over them to weep.
The faded flower, the small white glove,
The little ring, the portrait fair,
Are relics of a long-lost love;
And whisp'ring soft and whisp'ring low
A story of a little grave,
They cause these bitter tears to flow.

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